CMAQ, TAP-L and Regional Shared Fund Call for Projects Update

The upcoming call for projects for several funding sources begins soon. Communities can apply for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding, the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP-L), and the regional STP Shared Fund starting January 15 with applications due to Planning Liaisons by March 1. The applications will be reviewed by CMAP in the following months, put under public review starting in July, and formally selected and approved in September and October. Finally, federal eligibility determination and notifications of funding will occur in November. A webinar offering an overview of the submittal process will occur at 2:00 p.m. on January 15. Staff will forward a link to the webinar once it is available.

CMAQ funding can be used for transit improvements, traffic flow improvements, bicycle facilities, direct emissions reduction projects, demonstration projects, and more. Scoring differs by project type but the primary consideration for all CMAQ projects is the cost-effectiveness of air emission reductions. Additional considerations are transportation impact criteria, meeting regional priorities like inclusive growth, geographic balance, project readiness, and the project mix. TAP-L funding, meanwhile, can only be used for bike facility projects. Scoring for TAP-L includes five factors: contribution to a regional greenways or trails plan; population and employment density; safety and attractiveness; benefits to economically disadvantaged areas; and, project readiness. For both CMAQ and TAP-L, phase I engineering should be substantially complete and bike facility projects must be featured in at least one adopted bike plan, comprehensive plan, or other plan.
The Regional Shared Fund is intended to make large and lasting contributions to regional transportation priorities. Eligible Projects for the Shared Fund need three local partners including at least one municipality, or a cost more than $5 million. Partners must demonstrate financial or in-kind project involvement. Private for-profit and non-profit organizations may partner with a public sponsor that meets the previously stated conditions, but may not submit applications or act as the lead agency for project implementation.

The Shared Fund has broad eligibility in comparison to other funding sources, but it is targeted toward road reconstructions, transit station rehabilitations/reconstructions, bridge rehabilitations/reconstructions, highway/rail grade crossing improvements, road expansions, bus speed improvements, corridor-level or small area safety improvements, and truck route improvements.

Costs for phase I engineering will be the responsibility of the project sponsor. With limited exceptions, all other phases -- including phase II engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction (including construction engineering) -- are eligible for the Shared Fund. Sponsors may request STP Shared Fund funding for Phase I engineering based on hardship.

All eligible project phases will be programmed at a maximum level of 80 percent federal funding under the program. The sponsor must have already committed a minimum of 20 percent in matching funds when the project is submitted. Proposals which indicate that the sponsor will pay more than the minimum local match will receive points as part of the project readiness portion of the scoring process. The local match does not necessarily have to be provided directly by the sponsor, but it must be a non-federal funding source to qualify as match.

Projects applying to the shared fund will be scored based on CMAP methodology, though local councils may create a methodology to apply their allocated bonus points. Please contact your Planning Liaison with questions or see more information on the call for projects from CMAP.
Bike-Ped Committee Discusses Multimodal Plan

The NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee met on December 18 and discussed development of the NWMC Multimodal Plan, which is being funded through the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Local Technical Assistance (LTA) Program. NWMC and CMAP staff reviewed responses to the Request for Proposals in November and interviewed finalists in early December. The contract will be considered by the CMAP board for approval in January, with the plan update to begin soon thereafter.

Additionally, NWMC staff updated the Committee on a Cook County Forest Preserve project to improve a Des Plaines River Trail railroad crossing just north of Golf Road in Des Plaines. Trail users are currently prohibited from crossing the tracks at this location, forcing them to find their own detour to reconnect with the trail. While multiple options were considered, including a sidepath along the existing Golf Road underpass and an upgrade of the at-grade crossing to meet safety standards, the preferred alternative is a bridge over the tracks. Next steps include a public meeting, obtaining environmental approvals from IDOT and submitting a draft Project Development Report (PDR) to IDOT for review.

CMAP My Daily Travel Survey

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is conducting the My Daily Travel survey, asking households in northeastern Illinois how they get from place to place in our region. Households can participate in the survey by signing up at www.MyDailyTravel.com. By providing accurate information about your daily travel, participants will help ensure that funding to maintain roads, bridges, and transit is spent where it is needed most. Households that complete the survey will earn $50. School districts can earn $10 per student who takes the survey. Interested school districts should contact CMAP for more information.

CMAP Inclusive Growth Survey

CMAP is requesting input via a short six-question survey on inclusive growth and prioritized investment. The survey asks what prioritized investment means to you, how you define it, its prioritization, and more. Inclusive growth and prioritized investment are two of the three overarching principles of the ON TO 2050 plan.
Northwest Council of Mayors Discusses Surface Transportation Program

The Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee met on December 7 at the Barrington Village Hall. The committee voted to move all of the Council’s Surface Transportation Program (STP) projects currently programmed in the multi-year list (MYB) into FY 2020, providing the ability to more easily reprogram projects if additional regional funding becomes available. The Committee also approved a methodology development schedule for the Council ahead of the adoption of a new STP project selection methodology in September 2019. NWMC staff will solicit volunteers to serve on the working group to draft the new methodology. The committee also voted to approve a functional classification change request from the City of Prospect Heights and a STP funding phase transfer request from the Village of Niles.

North Shore Technical Committee Discusses Surface Transportation Program Status

The North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee met December 19 at the Skokie Village Hall to discuss the Council’s current list of Surface Transportation Program (STP) projects. The Committee discussed the need to prioritize the projects that are outside of its active program, which will better position the Council if additional funds become available for those projects. Members of the Committee also agreed to meet in January to discuss updating the STP project selection methodology for the next call for projects. This meeting will occur January 23 at 2:30 p.m. at the NWMC offices. It should also be noted that, due to scheduling conflicts, future North Shore Technical Committee meetings have been moved to the 4th Thursday of the month with the next full technical committee meeting scheduled for March 28.